



Border Wall Contracting Timeline for 2017

The Project On Government Oversight (POGO) is closely monitoring the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) expanded border security procurement efforts. The following timeline details publicly available information about DHS's contracting process and will be updated from time to time.

January 25 – President Donald Trump signs an Executive Order titled “Border Security and Immigration Enforcement Improvements” that directs the Department of Homeland Security to immediately begin planning and constructing “a physical wall on the southern border,” as well as to produce a study on southern border security, increase detention facility capacity, and hire 5,000 additional Border Patrol agents.

February 24 – Customs and Border Protection's (CBP) Procurement Directorate posts [presolicitation notice](#) announcing the agency will soon post a solicitation for “the design and build of several prototype wall structures in the vicinity of the United States border with Mexico.” The solicitations will be split into two phases: submission of a concept paper describing how bidders would construct a prototype of the wall, and a “downselect” of proposals into a group of 20 from which awardees will be chosen.

March 2 – The DHS posts a [Request for Information](#) (RFI) asking bidders to contribute ideas for the “DHS Border Wall Long-Term Strategy.” The RFI states these ideas should take the form of white papers describing “innovative ideas to design, finance and complete construction of physical infrastructure...to aid the Border Patrol in detecting and preventing illegal border crossings.”

March 3 – CBP [amends presolicitation notice](#) to provide further details of wall requirements and move deadlines back to March 20 for Phase 1 and May 3 for Phase 2. Additional requirements include 30-foot height as well as features for “aesthetics, anti-climbing, and resistance to tampering or damage.” Also clarifies that CBP will issue multiple Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts, and may also compete additional contracts among the final awardees.

March 9 – CBP [amends presolicitation notice](#) to notify bidders that final solicitation will not be issued earlier than March 15.

March 14 – CBP [amends presolicitation notice](#) to say it “intends to expand the opportunity for offerors to propose wall designs” because of high industry interest and plans to release two solicitations, “one focused on concrete designs and one focused on other designs.”

March 17 – CBP posts two separate Requests for Proposals (RFP), one for a prototype of a “[Solid Concrete Wall](#)” and one for “[Other Border Wall](#).” The RFPs are nearly identical, including design requirements of a “physically imposing” wall and features that deter people from climbing over or tunneling under it. The only difference in the requirements is that one design must incorporate reinforced concrete, while the other must include a see-through element that “facilitates situational awareness.” The minimum task order value is \$100,000, with a maximum price of \$300,000 for each IDIQ contract. The contracts do not indicate how much the actual wall contracts will be worth.

March 27 – DHS [posts an update](#) to the border strategy RFI, which reveals that DHS received over 100 responses.

March 28--April 1 – CBP amends the wall construction RFPs several times to push back deadlines, make minor changes to the text of the solicitation, and post questions from potential vendors alongside answers from CBP's procurement office. The questions, which number in the hundreds, generally seek clarification on how they are supposed to provide details on clearly complicated projects with so little guidance from the government and on such short notice.

May 2 – CBP [adds an amendment](#) to both RFIs that says vendors will be notified no earlier than May 8 if they made it to Phase II. The deadline for the selected Phase II vendors to submit their proposals is “tentatively” May 30 or after. DHS planned to visit Phase II bidders in mid-May.

May 12 – CBP [posts a notice](#) stating it completed Phase I evaluations and that Phase II offerors will be notified “in the next several days.” The notice also says the government “will not release detailed information about the results of the downselection, including the names of bidders and the exact number of offerors who were selected for Phase II.”

May 25 – CBP [updates the border strategy RFI](#), stating that DHS has reviewed proposals and is “including them as part of our market research and long-term acquisition planning for border security investments.” The update also states that DHS is considering “near-term funding opportunities that could help us further refine” some ideas, which could “advise technology roadmaps for the longer term.”

June 27 – CBP [Acting Deputy Commissioner Ron Vitiello said](#) CBP will choose four to eight companies to build prototypes and that construction will begin before September 1. He also said CBP had eliminated about 130 miles from consideration for wall construction because natural terrain made infrastructure untenable.

July 7 – DHS [issues a final RFI update](#) that reveals DHS received nearly 300 responses for long-term border strategy. DHS also notes that CBP has identified five “categories of innovation” that could shape the long-term strategy: Unmanned Ground Vehicles; Financing/Economics/Funding; Fiber Optic sensor placement/intrusion detection; Implications across DHS (CBP, USCG, ICE, USCIS); and Modeling and Simulation.